

SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLE:

ON THE STATUS OF WOMAN IN JEWISH RELIGIOUS LAW

by

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The Equal Rights of Woman Law 5711 – 1951 demands rethinking on the status of woman in Jewish religious law. Although some of the traditional disqualifications of woman are based upon biological considerations, most are the result of former social structure. As long as society accepted the ethos of service to God rather than of individual happiness, woman acquiesced in these views. The matter became problematic, however, with the modernisation of social structures.

The following rules of halakhah should therefore be re-examined: the exemption of woman from the duty of learning Torah, from the duty of founding a family, from the application of those commandments linked with time, and from public prayer; the assumption that woman is in greater need of marriage than man, and that man suffers more by certain changes than woman.

Apologetical and mystical interpretations have been offered to justify these rules. Some of the authorities, however, have already drawn distinctions between the social background of these rules and the conditions obtaining in this time. The author suggests further use of this method, so as to make woman an active participant in Jewish religion as well as in other spheres of life.

Summary by the author

* De'oth 41, Fall 1971, pp, 29 - 35.